

## SENATOR COLLINS STATEMENT FROM FORT HOOD INVESTIGATION NEWS CONFERENCE

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Ranking Member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, today made the following statement at a press conference on Capitol Hill with Committee Chairman Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., regarding the release of their bipartisan report on the failures of the U.S. government to prevent the November 5, 2009 shooting at the Fort Hood Army base that killed 13 people and wounded 32 others.

The full text of Senator Collins' comments is as follows:

"Our conclusion is alarming: The Department of Defense and the FBI collectively had sufficient information to have detected Major Hasan's radicalization to violent Islamist extremism but they failed to act effectively on the many red flags signaling that he had become a potential threat.

"Due to multiple misjudgments and failures to act, actions that might have prevented his attacks were not taken.

"Detecting a lone wolf can be very difficult, but in this case, the fact is that both the FBI and the Army were aware of Major Hasan. This is not a case where a lone wolf was unknown to the FBI or unknown to the military officials until he struck. And that is the tragedy of this case. Major Hasan was known to both the FBI and the Army.

"This was an American military officer known to have communicated with a terrorism suspect under active investigation by the FBI -- whose radical extremism was increasingly evident to his colleagues and to his superiors.

"Most disturbing to me are three failures:

"First was the failure of the Department of Defense to act on Hasan's obvious radicalization by at least disciplining him or even discharging him. And, I want to point out that those are actions that could have been taken, that should have been taken, under existing personnel and extremism policies. Hasan's increasing extremism was well known to his supervisors and his colleagues at Walter Reed as was his poor performance.

"Hasan traced a clear path toward radicalization in plain view of his fellow Army officers. Indeed, as the Chairman has pointed out, the revelations of his acceptance of this violent ideology disturbed his colleagues, to the extent that two individuals described him as a 'ticking time bomb.'

"Yet despite these indications and despite this clear evidence, the Army took no action, laying the foundation for what would be a cursory investigation by the FBI which relied, in part, on Hasan's inadequate and misleading officer evaluations.

"The second finding that is so disturbing to me was the failure of the Joint Terrorism Task Force to share with the Army the fact that Hasan was communicating with a known terrorist. In this case, the JTTF did not live up to its potential and acted as another stovepipe, failing to communicate vital information.

"The third failure in my judgment was the woefully and inexcusably inadequate investigation conducted by the Washington Joint Terrorism Task Force. As the Chairman has pointed out, the investigation was concluded in about half of a day, just four hours. That is all the time that the Washington JTTF spent investigating whether a military officer in communication with a known terrorist suspect amounted to a national security threat. Additional investigative action was not taken even when the JTTF responsible for forwarding the lead pressed for more action.

"This hasty decision to close the investigation cost the government its last, best chance to identify the threat posed by Major Hasan and to potentially prevent the November 2009 attack.

"Let me make just a few other important points:

"Our investigation revealed that there were no legal restrictions that encumbered the investigation of Major Hasan. You may recall that at first, Administration officials pointed to restrictions that they said made it difficult to conduct the investigation. What we have found was that there were no legal restrictions that hindered that investigation.

"Similarly, there were no legal restrictions on sharing investigative information on Hasan, and particularly his communications with the known terrorist suspect, with the Army. There was no reason that information could not have been communicated.

"Another point to be made is that Hasan's behavior and declarations at Walter Reed were not First Amendment protected and they went far beyond any academic debate.

"It's clear that the FBI has made great progress in focusing on counterterrorism since the attacks on our country nearly 10 years ago. The FBI has experienced some successes for which we give them credit and for which our nation is grateful. But, it is equally clear from our year-long investigation, much additional work is needed to truly transform the FBI into a counterterrorism effective organization, and much more also needs to be done by this Administration to name the enemy that we face and to develop strategies to counter it.

"Thank you."

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